

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FLORIDA SUPREME COURT APPROVED FAMILY LAW FORM 12.903(a), ANSWER, WAIVER, AND REQUEST FOR COPY OF FINAL JUDGMENT OF DISSOLUTION OF MARRIAGE (03/09)

When should this form be used?

This form should be used when you have been served with a **petition** for **dissolution of marriage** and you do not wish to **contest** it or appear at a **hearing**. If you file this form, you are admitting all of the allegations in the **petition**, saying that you do not need to be notified of or appear at the **final hearing**, and that you would like a copy of the **final judgment** mailed to you.

This form should be typed or printed in black ink, and your signature should be witnessed by a **notary public** or **deputy clerk**. After completing this form, you should sign the form before a notary public. You should **file** the original with the **clerk of the circuit court** in the county where the petition was filed and keep a copy for your records.

What should I do next?

You have 20 days to **answer** after being **served** with the other party's petition. A copy of this form, along with all of the other forms required with this **answer** and **waiver**, must be mailed or hand delivered to the other party in your case.

Where can I look for more information?

Before proceeding, you should read "General Information for Self-Represented Litigants found at the beginning of these forms. The words that are in **bold underline** in these instructions are defined there.

Special notes...

With this form, you must also file the following:

- **Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction and Enforcement Act (UCCJEA) Affidavit**, Florida Supreme Court Approved Family Law Form 12.902(d), if the case involves a dependent or minor child(ren).
- **Child Support Guidelines Worksheet**, Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure Form 12.902(e), if the case involves a dependent or minor child(ren). (If you do not know the other party's income, you may file this worksheet after his or her financial affidavit has been served on you).
- **Marital Settlement Agreement for Dissolution of Marriage with Dependent or Minor Child(ren)**, Florida Supreme Court Approved Family Law Form 12.902(f)(1), or **Marital**

Settlement Agreement for Dissolution of Marriage with No Dependent or Minor Child(ren), Florida Supreme Court Approved Family Law Form 12.902(f)(2), if you have reached an agreement on any or all of the issues.

- **Notice of Social Security Number**, Florida Supreme Court Approved Family Law Form 12.902(j).
- **Family Law Financial Affidavit**, Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure Form 12.902(b) or (c). (This must be filed within 45 days of service of the petition on you, if not filed at the time you file this answer.)
- **Certificate of Compliance with Mandatory Disclosure**, Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure Form 12.932. (This must be filed within 45 days of service of the petition on you, if not filed at the time you file this answer, unless you and the other party have agreed not to exchange these documents.)

Parenting and Time-Sharing... By filing this answer and waiver, you are agreeing to any parenting and time-sharing requests in the petition. The judge may request a **parenting plan recommendation** or appoint a **guardian ad litem** in your case. This means that a neutral person will review your situation and report to the judge concerning parenting issues. The purpose of such intervention is to be sure that the best interests of the child(ren) is (are) being served. For more information, you may consult section 61.13, Florida Statutes.

A **parenting course** must be completed prior to entry of a final judgment. You should contact the clerk, family law intake staff, or judicial assistant about requirements for parenting courses where you live.

Listed below are some terms with which you should become familiar before completing your answer to the petition. **If you do not fully understand any of the terms below or their implications, you should speak with an attorney before going any further.**

- **Shared Parental Responsibility**
- **Sole Parental Responsibility**
- **Supervised Time-Sharing**
- **No contact**
- **Parenting Plan**
- **Parenting Plan Recommendation**
- **Time-Sharing Schedule**

Child Support... By filing this answer and waiver, you are agreeing to any child support requests in the petition. The court may order one parent to pay **child support** to assist the other parent in meeting the child(ren)'s material needs. **Both parents are required to provide financial support**, but one parent may be ordered to pay a portion of his or her support for the child(ren) to the other parent. Florida has adopted guidelines for determining the amount of child support to be paid. These guidelines are based on the combined income of **both** parents and take into account the financial contributions of both parents. You must file a **Family Law Financial Affidavit**, Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure Form 12.902(b) or (c), and your spouse will be required to do the same. From your financial affidavits, you should be able to calculate the amount of child support that should be paid using the **Child Support Guidelines Worksheet**, Florida Family Law Rules of

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Procedure Form 12.902(e). Because the child support guidelines take several factors into consideration, change over time, and vary from state to state, your child support obligation may be more or less than that of other people in seemingly similar situations.

Alimony... By filing this answer and waiver, you are agreeing to any alimony requests in the petition. Alimony may be awarded to a spouse if the judge finds that he or she needs it and that the other spouse has the ability to pay it. **If you want alimony, you must request it in writing in a counterpetition and should not use this form. If you do not request alimony in writing before the final hearing, it is waived (you may not request it later).** You may request either permanent alimony, lump sum alimony, or rehabilitative alimony.

Marital/Nonmarital Assets and Liabilities... Florida law requires an **equitable distribution** of marital assets and marital liabilities. “Equitable” does not necessarily mean “equal.” Many factors, including child support, time-sharing and alimony awards, may lead the court to make an unequal (but still equitable) distribution of assets and liabilities. Nonmarital assets and nonmarital liabilities are those assets and liabilities which the parties agree or the court determines belong to, or are the responsibility of, only one of the parties. By filing this answer and waiver, you are agreeing to any requests in the petition regarding division of assets and liabilities.

Final Judgment... You should receive a copy of the Final Judgment in the mail. If, for some reason you do not, you should call the clerk’s office to request a copy. It is important for you to review a copy of the Final Judgment in your case to see what happened and to know what you must do and what you are entitled to receive.

Nonlawyer... Remember, a person who is NOT an attorney is called a nonlawyer. If a nonlawyer helps you fill out these forms, that person must give you a copy of a **Disclosure from Nonlawyer**, Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure Form 12.900(a), before he or she helps you. A nonlawyer helping you fill out these forms also **must** put his or her name, address, and telephone number on the bottom of the last page of every form he or she helps you complete.

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE _____ JUDICIAL CIRCUIT,
IN AND FOR _____ COUNTY, FLORIDA

Case No.: _____

Division: _____

Petitioner,

and

Respondent.

**ANSWER, WAIVER, AND REQUEST FOR COPY OF FINAL JUDGMENT OF
DISSOLUTION OF MARRIAGE**

I, {full legal name} _____, Respondent, being sworn, certify that the following information is true:

1. Respondent answers the Petition for Dissolution of Marriage filed in this action and admits all the allegations. By admitting all of the allegations in the petition, respondent agrees to all relief requested in the petition including any requests regarding parenting and time-sharing, child support, alimony, distribution of marital assets and liabilities, and temporary relief.
2. Respondent waives notice of hearing as well as all future notices in connection with the Petition for Dissolution of Marriage, as filed. Respondent also waives appearance at the final hearing.
3. Respondent requests that a copy of the Final Judgment of Dissolution of Marriage entered in this case be forwarded to Respondent at the address below.
4. If this case involves minor child(ren), a completed Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction and Enforcement Act (UCCJEA) Affidavit, Florida Supreme Court Approved Family Law Form 12.902(d), is filed with this answer.
5. A completed Notice of Social Security Number, Florida Supreme Court Approved Family Law Form 12.902(j), is filed with this answer.

A completed Family Law Financial Affidavit, Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure Form 12.902(b) or (c), is filed with this answer.

I certify that a copy of this document was [**one** only] () mailed () faxed and mailed () hand delivered to the person(s) listed below on {date} _____.

Other party or his/her attorney:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Fax Number: _____

I understand that I am swearing or affirming under oath to the truthfulness of the claims made in this answer and waiver and that the punishment for knowingly making a false statement includes fines and/or imprisonment.

Dated: _____

Signature of Respondent
Printed Name: _____
Address: _____
City, State, Zip: _____
Telephone Number: _____
Fax Number: _____

STATE OF FLORIDA
COUNTY OF _____

Sworn to or affirmed and signed before me on _____ by _____.

NOTARY PUBLIC or DEPUTY CLERK

[Print, type, or stamp commissioned name of notary or clerk.]

____ Personally known
____ Produced identification
____ Type of identification produced _____

IF A NONLAWYER HELPED YOU FILL OUT THIS FORM, HE/SHE MUST FILL IN THE BLANKS BELOW: [fill in all blanks]

I, *{full legal name and trade name of nonlawyer}* _____,
a nonlawyer, located at *{street}* _____, *{city}* _____,
{state} _____, *{phone}* _____, helped *{name}* _____,
who is the respondent, fill out this form.